

# Ruling: \$15 min. wage can be applied to Sea-Tac Airport workers

KING 5 News, KING5.com 10:41 a.m. PDT August 20, 2015

The City of Seatac's \$15 per hour minimum wage applies to hospitality workers at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, [the Washington State Supreme Court decided in a ruling announced Thursday morning.](#)

Businesses managing restaurants and other concessions at the airport had challenged the law's applicability to their workers, noting the airport is operated by the Port of Seattle, a public agency governed by an elected commission. The plaintiffs said the wage law effectively preempted the Port's control over the airport, an argument the Port of Seattle joined in making.

But the court ruled the wage can be enforced at Sea-Tac Airport because "there is no indication that it will interfere with airport operations." SeaTac voters approved the \$15 per hour wage in 2013 when they narrowly approved Proposition 1.

This decision reverses previous rulings by a trial court. The trial court said under state law, Prop 1 could not be enforced at Sea-Tac and "federal labor law preempted a provision of Proposition 1 protecting workers from certain types of retaliation." Thursday's decision by the State Supreme Court reverses both of those rulings.

In its decision, the Washington Supreme court said "federal labor law does not preempt the provision protecting workers from retaliation. We otherwise affirm the trial court and thus uphold Proposition 1 in its entirety."

In response to the ruling, Attorney General Bob Ferguson released the following statement:

"I'm pleased the Court adopted my office's proposed approach as a key part of its 5-4 decision. This important ruling helps protect the rights of workers at Sea-Tac Airport and recognizes the broad authority state and local governments have to support their hard-working residents."

[Click here to read the Washington State Supreme Court's complete ruling.](#)